



Representative Brad Benson

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Committees:

- Appropriations
- Financial Institutions
& Insurance, co-chair

Toll-Free Hotline: 1-800-562-6000
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2001

Good Government Survey

Dear Friends & Neighbors,

On January 8, the fifty-seventh Legislature convened in Olympia for the 2001 Legislative Session. Once again the House of Representatives finds itself split with 49 Republican and 49 Democrat members. There are many great opportunities and challenges that await us over the course of this legislative session – and many important issues to consider. With 105 days to get our work done, it was important for both of us to hit the ground running.

The passage of Initiatives 728 and 732 will be at the forefront of many discussions and policy choices this year as we work to fill a gaping \$1.3 billion hole in the state budget.

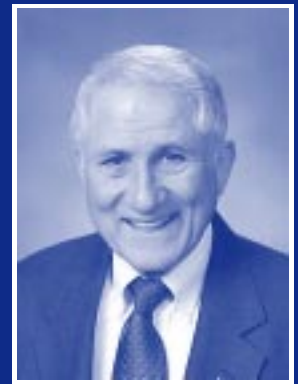
Our goal is to help Governor Locke understand that when it comes to government, bigger rarely means better. We consider it our job to make government work better for less – so that more of the money you earn stays in your own pockets. Big tax hikes just aren't the answer.

We hope you'll take the time to read this short newsletter about the issues we will be addressing during the legislative session this year. We also hope you'll take the time to fill out and return the survey included. The more we hear from you, the better we can represent you in the Legislature.

Yours truly,

Brad Benson
State Representative

John Ahern
State Representative



Representative John Ahern

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Committees:

- Criminal Justice & Corrections,
Vice chair
- Trade & Economic Development
- Transportation



6th District

Toll-free hotline: 1-800-562-6000

6th DISTRICT TOWN HALL MEETING • March 17th 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.
Phase 1 Auditorium, Rm 122 • 668 N. Riverpoint Blvd., Spokane, WA

State Representative

Brad Benson

A Message from Brad Benson

Thank you for the opportunity to continue serving the 6th District. I'm honored to represent you and I look forward to working on your behalf during the 2001 Legislative Session.

Once again, I'm co-chair of the House Financial Institutions and Insurance Committee, which considers issues relating to financial services, consumer privacy and regaining credibility to the Office of Insurance Commissioner.

As a member of the House Appropriations Committee, I will have an opportunity to bring your concerns to the table as we create the state's operating budget. Every dollar we spend is a dollar that was first earned by the taxpayers of our state. The Legislature must prioritize state spending just like the families we represent back home. I am committed to creating a responsible budget that meets our needs without spending funds on unnecessary government programs and services.

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES FOR 2001

The legislative session will last 105 days this year. During that time, we will address a multitude of issues, but here are a few that we want to highlight.

Education:

We spend a great deal of money each year on schools. Now we should make certain all children have access to quality teachers. We must also address the root causes of school violence. Children simply can't succeed if they don't feel safe in their own schools.

Budget & Taxes:

Back in December, Governor Locke submitted a budget that would almost certainly lead us down the road to tax increases at many levels – gas tax increases, sales tax hikes, etc.

However, it just isn't possible to "tax and spend" our way to a more prosperous future. We'll work to see that the needs of Spokane-area families are placed ahead of state agencies and bureaucrats.

Safe Neighborhoods & Communities

Public safety is an ongoing concern that needs our focused attention. Meth labs are springing up across our state faster than we can shut them down. Our neighborhoods should be free from the threat of drugs, repeat sex offenders, and violent criminals. Also, juvenile criminals should receive early intervention to help them avoid a life of crime and prison.

State Representative

John Ahern

John Ahern: Your New State Representative

As your newly elected state representative, I'd like to tell you a little about myself.

I was born in Havre, Montana and later graduated from the University of Denver. After serving in the United States Army, I decided to pursue a career in business and sales. From 1970 to 1984, I was the sales manager at Abadan Reprographics. In 1984 I founded Janco Products, a copier and office supply business in Spokane.

As a small businessman, I came to understand how intrusive government truly is – not only because of the heavy tax burdens we all pay, but also because of regulations that keep many small businesses from getting off the ground.

I believe very strongly in being active in our community, and have been involved in the Boy Scouts, Kiwanis and the Knights of Columbus.

It's a great honor to serve alongside Brad Benson as your state representative, and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

State Representatives

John Ahern & Brad Benson



**"We'll work hard to make your voice
heard in Olympia."**

-Brad & John

2001 Good Government Survey

Please share your thoughts and concerns about the issues below. Your answers will be a great help to us as the Legislature meets this year. Please cut and return to us. Thanks!

YOUR PRIORITIES

Please rank the following issues in order of their importance (1=most important; 10=least important)

- ___ Crime / Public Safety
- ___ Government Reform
- ___ Education
- ___ Health Care
- ___ Election / Campaign Reform
- ___ Taxes
- ___ Energy (electric/gas utilities)
- ___ Transportation
- ___ Environment
- ___ Economic Development/Jobs

ENDANGERED SPECIES

The listing of Salmon as an endangered species, coupled with Governor Locke's water policy, has placed eastern Wash-

ington in danger of losing thousands of jobs and sending more businesses out of state. The BF Goodrich plant currently being built in the West Plains may have to wait 3-5 years for the water permits necessary to operate. Should we:

- ___ Do the best we can for salmon, but not to the extent that it threatens jobs in Spokane
- ___ Protect salmon at all costs

BUDGET & TAXES

With the passage of I-728 and I-732, as well as growing demands in other sectors of the government, the state is facing a billion dollar gap in the budget. How should the Legislature address this issue? (please circle one)

- A. Cut other state spending and social services
- B. Increase gas and sales taxes as necessary

- C. Ask for public approval of tax increases on the next ballot
- D. A combination of spending cuts and tax increases
- E. Repeal the initiatives and freeze state spending

ENERGY

Our State and region are facing a coming energy crisis. As populations have grown, little or no new energy resources have been developed. We'll see prices increase dramatically, with two distinct proposals offered to "solve" the problem. Which would you prefer?

- ___ Eliminate private utility companies and have government step in and run all energy production and distribution systems.
- ___ Increase supply by allowing private utility companies and others to develop new energy sources.

(continued on next page)

State Representatives
Benson & Ahern
House of Representatives
PO Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504-0600



Place
Stamp
Here



From: _____

EDUCATION

Please indicate which education choices you support (please mark all that apply)

- ☐ Higher starting pay for beginning teachers (currently \$30,000 plus supplemental contract)
- ☐ Higher pay for experienced teachers (maximum \$52,000 plus supplemental contract)
- ☐ Dismissing poor teachers
- ☐ Make it easier for schools to hire teachers with professional work experience
- ☐ Requiring new teachers only to test for competence
- ☐ Requiring all teachers to have mastered the subjects they teach
- ☐ Allowing merit pay salary increases (better teachers get larger pay increases)
- ☐ Salary increases for all teachers regardless of merit (cur-

rently teachers receive three percent step increases plus approximately three percent cost of living increase)

- ☐ School choice for all parents
- ☐ School choice for low-income parents only
- ☐ No school choice
- ☐ Requiring schools to be at state funded class sizes (grades K-4 state funds class size of 18, grades 5-12 state funds class size of 22)
- ☐ Class sizes smaller than the state currently funds
- ☐ Current class sizes are fine
- ☐ Additional curriculum time for teachers (half days)
- ☐ Eliminating tobacco use by students around school grounds
- ☐ Increase drug enforcement around schools

STATE GOVERNMENT

Please indicate which statement below most accurately reflects your view of state government:

- ☐ State gov't is too large, bureaucratic and intrusive. I don't feel it serves my interests well
- ☐ State gov't is too large and bureaucratic, but I believe things could be worse
- ☐ State gov't works fine as it is – no need for major changes
- ☐ State gov't doesn't do enough – increase spending to fund new programs

Please provide your email address if you would like to receive to regular updates:

E-mail: _____

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2001 Session Report

Representatives
Benson & Ahern

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